

The President's Daily Brief

4 June 1973

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Diplomatic jockeying at the United Nations has produced no sign of compromise among the major parties to Wednesday's Security Council debate on the Middle East. (Page 1)

The crash of a Soviet supersonic airliner will hurt the Russians in future competition with the British-French Concorde. (Page 2)

Juan Peron is planning to return to Argentina soon, and his early return is likely to stir restlessness among military leaders who oppose him. (Page 3)

Fedayeen terrorists are again active. (Page 4)

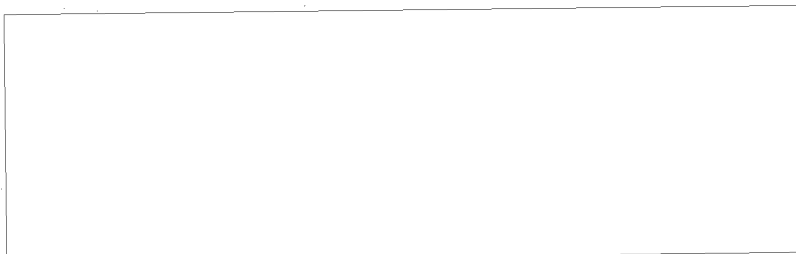
Weakened Communist forces around Cambodia's capital are taking a breather. (Page 4)

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MIDDLE EAST

The UN Security Council's Middle East debate has been postponed at Egyptian request until Wednesday to permit further consultations, but there is no sign of give among the major parties. The Egyptian Government is reported to be planning a demand for immediate Israeli withdrawal from its territories, and is said to have no interest in further mediation efforts.



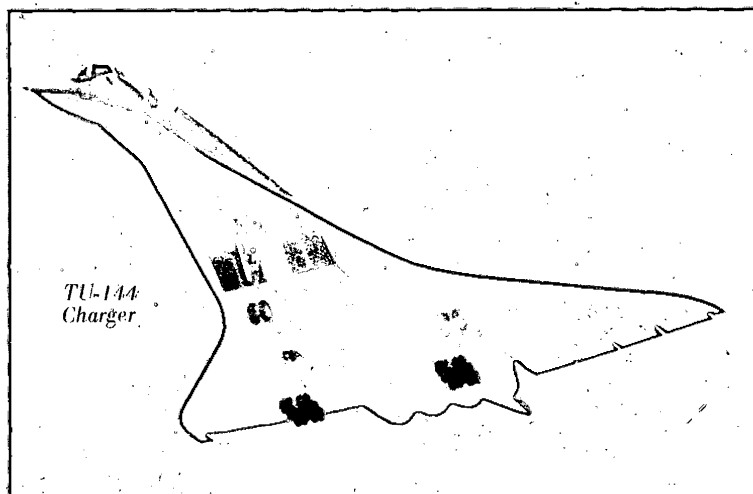
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Israel continues to oppose any new UN mediatory instruments. Its ambassador, Tekoah, has asked US representatives for a clear statement of willingness to veto proposals such as the mediation committee favored by London. Tekoah did suggest, however, that his government might accept UN Secretary-General Waldheim as a go-between to replace Jarring.

The Soviets have also informed US officials that they will oppose a mediation committee. While concurring with the US preference for a simple reaffirmation of existing arrangements, they have expressed doubt that this would be possible.



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USSR

The crash yesterday of the Soviets' TU-144 supersonic airliner at the Paris Air Show puts Moscow at a disadvantage in future competition with the British-French Concorde.

Despite Moscow's claims that the craft that crashed in Paris was a production model, only three such planes have been built and flown. Several more are under construction.

The plane that crashed was a larger and modified version of the TU-144 first shown at Paris in 1971. Westerners who had an opportunity to inspect that TU-144 have reported shoddy workmanship, outmoded equipment, and dissatisfaction with its engines.

The TU-144 has been promised by the Soviets for commercial service in 1975. If flight testing is continued at its present pace, the Soviet goal of 3,000 hours of tests suggests that its introduction will be late. The aircraft has been flown only about 250 hours compared to well over 1,000 hours for the Concorde.

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ARGENTINA

Juan Peron has announced that he is ending his 17 years of exile in Madrid and returning to Buenos Aires on June 21.

The former dictator's decision so soon after the inauguration of Hector Campora is probably in response to the urging of followers, who view his return as the capstone to the Peronist electoral victory.

Peron carefully avoided the question of whether he will become involved in the day-to-day operations of the government, saying merely that his first task will be the affairs of his Peronist movement. Peron also expressed an interest in visiting all the countries of South America.

Although the military leadership has pledged not to interfere, Peron's presence is likely to increase the restiveness of those officers who still oppose Peron personally and are distrustful of the new Peronist administration.

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NOTES

Arab Terrorists: Fedayeen terrorists are again active, ending the lull brought on by the fighting in Lebanon.

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The Lebanese Army hurt the guerrillas in the heavy fighting last month, but not enough to affect their capabilities for terrorism.

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Another fedayeen group planning the hijacking of a Jordanian or US airliner in an effort to gain release of Palestinian terrorists held in Jordan.

Cambodia: Fighting has tapered off significantly in recent days, in part because of a weakening of Communist combat capabilities. According to an intercept, two Communist regiments operating along the Mekong River have taken heavy casualties over the past five months and are not planning to resume hostilities before "mid-June or July." According to another intercept, the Communists hope to shift the focus of their offensive operations soon to the area southwest of Phnom Penh, especially near Route 4.

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